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Sen. Birkholz pleased governor supports GOP ideas to protect groundwater; is disappointed by loss of commitment

Lansing – Sen. Patty Birkholz today said she is pleased the governor supports a Republican plan to protect Michigan’s groundwater, but is disappointed the governor is apparently backing away from last year’s agreement to move forward together.

The governor helped announce legislation this morning to regulate large-scale water withdrawals in Michigan.

Birkholz, chairwoman of the Senate Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee, said the proposals sound similar to those announced by the Senate Great Lakes Conservation Task Force. However, the agreement on how to complete those proposals apparently has been ignored.

“The Groundwater Advisory Council, created in 2003, was developed to review legislation that would manage water withdrawals in Michigan,” said Birkholz, R-Saugatuck Twp. “It was decided jointly that we needed more information on our water resources before taking legislative action.”

Birkholz added that all sides agreed the advisory council would be the best vehicle to develop legislation concerning water withdrawals.

“I intend on maintaining my commitment to that process and hope the governor will as well,” Birkholz said. “If we don’t wait for the recommendations of the advisory council before jumping into new regulations, we run the risk of over-regulating the issue. We could end up killing jobs and not protecting the environment. Legislative authority is not something to bandy about. It requires careful and informed deliberations.”

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